

TRUMAI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

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mitigated by intra-household sharing and the performance of services, normally done by mates, by co-resident relatives of the opposite sex. In this way unmarried persons could be integrated within the Trumai economy.

Among the twenty-eight persons of marriage age in the Trumai village, there were only eight unions involving seventeen persons. The eleven unmarried included one widower with a young child, one divorced man with a child, three widows with children, four unmarried men, and two unmarried women.

One of the widows was married during Quain's sojourn, but the other two were considered too old. One of the unmarried women subsequently took a mate, but the other, who had a clubfoot, was thought to be too old and ugly for marriage, although several men had sexual relations with her. Two of the unmarried men were probably also considered too old for marriage, a third was seeking a wife, and the fourth showed little interest in obtaining one. Neither the widower nor the divorced man were seeking wives at the time.

All these persons had made some sort of adjustment through their relatives. The incorporation of two of the unmarried men and of one of the widows into Nitvary's household shows how a functional interdependence within the household was achieved, despite the lack of a lineage in residence. Living at one end of the house were two old unmarried men, Yahu and Yakuma. At the other end were Nitvary, his wife Kaiti, his widowed mother Fayeru, and his young sister Kayaya. Gift-giving and food-sharing went on between all of the people in the house, but the two single men depended most on Fayeru, whom they called "sister," while Nitvary's needs were provided for by his wife. The members of the household were all dependent on each other, as Kaiti alone would have been hard pressed to do woman's work for two more men. Their presence, however, meant more food for the house.

In Aloari's house his unmarried brother Tun provided food for the cooking pots of Aloari's wife Yumunūwa, while her brother Oirupa exchanged services with his classificatory sister Yawala, the club-footed woman. By this free flow of food and service, which was especially marked between the sexes, each individual was economically fully functional, and everyone in the household was adequately cared for.

Most of the arguments in the village occurred between members of different houses. Aloari, his brother, and his brother-in-law showed considerable personal antipathy toward Maibu and jealousy of his status as chief. When a serious conflict broke out in the village over a marriage, it took the form of verbal quarrels between members of different houses.

The greater amity between co-residents was due to a number of factors. First, closer kinship ties usually prevailed, second, people on

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[186] Quain was told that the Kamayurá were "bad," because they permitted marriage with a sister's daughter.*

582 Cross-cousin marriage is correlated with sororal polygyny among the
595 Trumai and with the sexual privileges that a man may take with his
837 wife's sister. No indication was found of the sororate, despite its probable acceptability. There was only one case of the levirate, and that was the
587 marriage of the chief to his dead brother's wife. That the levirate is expected but not compulsory is apparent in the case of Yati and his brother's widow Vatsiat. She resided in Yati's house, and they performed
[44] many necessary, sexually specialized functions for each other. Although their hammocks were some distance apart, Vatsiat called him *ee* (husband) and became quite incensed at one of his paramours. However, Yati called her *apizi* (sibling), and apparently felt that there were no marital obligations between them. He had his love-life, which did not
[83] include her, and he showed no sign of annoyance at her escapades. It was a standing joke that every man in the village had sexual relations with Vatsiat, except where an incest taboo prohibited it.

582 Marriage between people of different generations, especially between
684 older women and younger men, was frequent; but the rules governing such unions are obscure. It was specifically frowned upon for a man to
835 marry his mother's brother's widow. However, when one young man did so, he was only mildly ridiculed and censured, and his status in the village was little affected.

Joking Relations

582 Cross-cousins were not the only acceptable marriage partners, but
602 they were the only ones with whom marriage was expected and especially
831 approved. Also, patterned and expected joking existed only between these kin. Cross-cousins of the same sex, especially males, bantered with each other, but most sexual joking occurred between men and women. Thus, Aloari enjoyed making suggestive remarks to the rather old and ugly Vatsiat and frequently accused her of improprieties with various men. On one occasion, partly for Quain's benefit, he threw her on her back and went through the motions of coitus.

602 Cross-cousins of the same sex confined their joking to pranks and
605 good-natured raillery, *ami tarajas*, which Quain translates as "cross-cousin talk." Mayuva teased Yati, who had a phobia of frogs, by chasing
831 after him with a frog hanging from a stick. Both men and women made great sport of urging Quain to throw their cross-cousins out of his house.
123 On one occasion, Quain, experimentally, made sexual suggestions to
602 several women who had congregated in his house. They all ran out
831 laughing shrilly, but one came back later to be reassured that it was

* Cf. Oberg 1963, p. 44.

THE LIFE CYCLE

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cumbent upon the males was a prohibition against wearing body paint for several months after the death. This ban extended to women, also. In addition, the female mourner could not sing in any of the ceremonies, and she cut her hair immediately after the death. Marriage was also forbidden her during the mourning period. (Autu came under censure as she had married her dead husband's sister's son — which at any time was reprehensible — even though her hair, cut when he died, had not yet grown back.) The woman was also required to wail occasionally for the dead person during the time of mourning, and she made flat mud discs, about one inch high, in the village center. Quain never found out the reason for this, although Kayaru made several of these markers for her dead brother. No special reverence or respect was given to the markers as they were usually demolished during the wrestling matches. 765 [587]

Recreation and Amusement

Trading sessions have been referred to as "games" because they are a form of amusement, but this appellation is in a way misleading, as the economic aspect of the "trade game" is very important. Actually, except for the intertribal spear-throwing contest, the only organized recreation is wrestling, and this is immensely popular throughout the whole upper Xingú area.⁴ Wrestling matches were especially frequent during intertribal visits and ceremonials. These occasions aroused keen interest, and competitive spirits ran high, but the onlookers made it a point of etiquette to show no partisanship, and the contestants made every effort to conceal latent intertribal hostility. They were always friendly to each other, and at the end of the match they exchanged a friendly embrace. This was not necessary between fellow Trumai or close kinsmen of different villages. The most effusive behavior was always shown toward those who were most disliked and mistrusted. 517 437 524 526 648 [77]

Wrestling matches always took place in the afternoon. All that was needed to start a match was a quorum of four or five men. These small bouts were usually informal and more in the nature of practice than competitive contests. When most of the men were in the village the contests attracted more attention and required more preparation. Bodies were painted and arm and leg bands worn. The hair was usually combed and plastered down. 526 [301]

The men lined up on the log in the men's circle or brought stools. The women and young boys watched from the periphery. Uninitiated boys were not allowed to take part in the men's wrestling, but the older ones were generally permitted to sit with the men. 352 [658]

Each wrestler tried for a grip by grabbing at the body of the other. A variant of the half-Nelson was frequently attempted. The match

⁴ Cf. Galvão 1949, p. 44.